

# Armed for Battle 7

## From Defeat to Victory

### Introduction

When you step into Joshua chapter 8...  
you're stepping into a moment that comes *after failure*.

And that matters.

Because chapter 7 left Israel in a place they had never been before.

Defeated.

Confused.

Exposed.

They had just seen Jericho fall...

walls collapse...

God move in power.

And then suddenly—Ai.

A small city.

A simple battle.

And yet—they are routed.

Not because God had changed.

But because something had shifted in them.

There was compromise.

There was disobedience.

There was something hidden beneath the surface.

And once that was brought into the light...

once it was dealt with...

Joshua 8 begins.

And it doesn't begin with movement.

It begins with God speaking.

## 1. The Principle of Divine Strategy

*Joshua 8:1*

*1 Then the LORD **said** to Joshua, “Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Take the whole army with you, and go up and attack Ai. For I have delivered into your hands the king of Ai, his people, his city and his land. “Do not be afraid... I have given Ai into your hand.”*

*Joshua 8:2-3*

*2 You shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king, **except** that you may carry off their plunder and livestock for yourselves. **Set an ambush** behind the city.”*

God is not interested in us mastering a method.

He is inviting us into **ongoing dependence**.

Because there is a world of difference between a good idea...  
and a God strategy.

*Romans 12:2 (NIV)*

*2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is —his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

*Colossians 1:9-10 (NIV)*

*9 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, 10 so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,...*

## 2. The Principle of Absolute Dependence

3 So Joshua and the whole army moved out to attack Ai. He chose **thirty thousand of his best fighting men** and sent them out at night 4 with these orders: "Listen carefully. You are to set an ambush behind the city. Don't go very far from it. All of you be on the alert. 5 I and all those with me will advance on the city, and when the men come out against us, as they did before, we will flee from them. 6 They will pursue us until we have lured them away from the city, for they will say, 'They are running away from us as they did before.' So when we flee from them, 7 you are to rise up from ambush and take the city. The LORD your God will give it into your hand. 8 When you have taken the city, set it on fire. **Do what the LORD has commanded.** See to it; you have my orders."

John 15:5 (NIV)

5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

## 3. The Principle of Complete Obedience

Josh 8:18-19

18 Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Hold out toward Ai the javelin that is in your hand, for into your hand I will deliver the city." So Joshua held out toward the city the javelin that was in his hand. 19 As soon as he did this, the men in the ambush rose quickly from their position and rushed forward. They entered the city and captured it and quickly set it on fire.

20 The men of Ai looked back and saw the smoke of the city rising up into the sky, but they had no chance to escape in any direction; the Israelites who had been fleeing toward the wilderness had turned back against their pursuers.

John 14:15 (NIV)

"If you love me, keep my commands.

## **4. The Principle of Covenant before Conquest**

He chooses **alignment over advancement**.

He chooses **worship over warfare**.

*Joshua 8:30-31*

*30 Then Joshua built on Mount Ebal an altar to the LORD, the God of Israel, 31 as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded the Israelites. He built it according to what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses—an altar of uncut stones, on which no iron tool had been used. On it they offered to the LORD burnt offerings and sacrificed fellowship offerings.*

### **Relationship with God before activity for God**

*Matthew 6:33 (NIV)*

*But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

## **5. The Principle of the Altar**

*Ephesians 2:8-9*

*“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith... and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.”*

*Heb 10:12-14*

*“But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins,  
he sat down at the right hand of God...  
For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever  
those who are being made holy.”*

## **6. The Principle of the Word**

*Joshua 8: 32-34*

*32 There, in the presence of the Israelites, Joshua wrote on stones a copy of the law of Moses. 33 All the Israelites, with their elders, officials and judges, were standing on both sides of the ark of the covenant of the LORD, facing the Levitical priests who carried it. ...34 Afterward, Joshua read all the words of the law—the blessings and the curses—just as it is written in the Book of the Law. 35 There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded that Joshua did not read to the whole assembly of Israel, including the women and children, and the foreigners who lived among them.*

*Deuteronomy 27:1-8 (NIV)*

*1 Moses and the elders of Israel commanded the people: “Keep all these commands that I give you today. 2 When you have crossed the Jordan into the land the LORD your God is giving you, set up some large stones and coat them with plaster. 3 Write on them all the words of this law when you have crossed over to enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, promised you. 4 And when you have crossed the Jordan, set up these stones on Mount Ebal, as I command you today, and coat them with plaster. 5 Build there an altar to the LORD your God, an altar of stones. Do not use any iron tool on them. 6 Build the altar of the LORD your God with fieldstones and offer burnt offerings on it to the LORD your God. 7 Sacrifice fellowship offerings there, eating them and rejoicing in the presence of the LORD your God. 8 And you shall write very clearly all the words of this law on these stones you have set up.”*

*2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NIV)*

*16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

*Matthew 7:24-25 (NIV)*

*24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.*

## **Conclusion**

**The greatest victory is not taking territory...  
it is staying surrendered.**